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(54) Rotation detector

(57) A rotation detector 10 for a miniature permanent magnet d.c. motor 20 comprises an induction coil 11 wound around a flux ring 15 for the motor. The flux

ring 15 has a stepped portion 18 accommodating the windings of the coil 11. The coil 11 produces electrical signals in response to changes in the magnetic field of the stator caused by rotation of the rotor

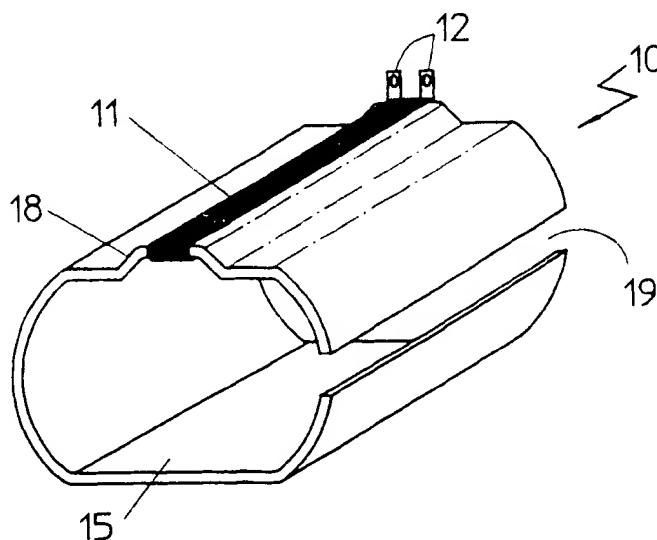


FIG. 1

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Description

Background of the Invention

This invention relates to a rotation detector for use with an electric motor and in particular, to a rotation detector for a miniature permanent magnet direct current (PMDC) motor.

Many applications of PMDC motors require the speed of the motor to be monitored or the number of revolutions made by the motor shaft to be counted. This is often achieved using a Hall sensor and a magnet fitted to the shaft or by using an encoder fitted to the shaft in co-operation with an optical sensor. Both of these methods involve relatively expensive parts, are time consuming to fit and require the motor to be designed to accommodate these parts as they occupy a significant amount of space either inside the motor, increasing the size of the motor or outside the motor where they are vulnerable to damage.

Recently, rotation detectors which use an induction coil to monitor changes in the magnetic flux of the motor as the rotor rotates have been developed, see for example, EP-A-0626748 in which an inductor/capacitor circuit fitted into a separate case which is fitted to the non-drive end of the motor by being press fitted to the bearing boss. In this arrangement, the coil is detecting leakage flux and for efficient motors, it is hoped that flux leakage is minimised to increase efficiency, reducing the reliability/sensitivity of this type of detector. See also EP-A-0529131 which uses a coil mounted within the motor

Summary of the Invention

To provide a sensitive detector, the rotation detector according to the present invention uses an induction coil wound around a magnetic flux conducting means adapted to provide a flux return path for the stator of the motor. Ideally, this magnetic flux conducting means is a flux ring fitted to the motor casing or alternatively, it may be a part of the motor casing. Flux rings are commonly used to provide a low resistance magnetic flux return path between the magnetic poles of the stator. Use of a flux ring helps to concentrate the magnetic flux and reduce flux leakage while allowing the motor casing to be made of thinner material without risking saturation of the magnetic path. By winding the induction coil around the flux ring, the flux ring acts as a core for the coil, simplifying forming of the coil while assuring that the magnetic flux passes through the coil, giving a strong signal to the rotation detection circuit. At the same time, the flux ring embodiment allows the motor to be changed without affecting the detection circuit. Indeed, the rotation detector can be fitted to any motor by suitable adaptation of the flux ring and does not require any particular features to be built into the motor.

The aim of the invention is to provide a novel rotation detector for a permanent magnet direct current mo-

tor using an induction coil.

As rotation detection circuits are well known and do not form a part of this invention, they will not be described although it should be remembered that the signal from the detector is fed to the detection circuit which will use this signal to achieve its designed function which may include speed control, position control, overload detection and fault conditions such as obstructed operation.

Accordingly, the present invention provides a rotation detector for use with a direct current motor having a casing housing a permanent magnet stator, the detector comprising: magnetic flux conducting means adapted to provide a flux return path for the stator; and detector means including a coil wound around the magnetic flux conducting means whereby changes in the magnetic flux of the motor generates an electrical signal in the coil.

Preferably, the magnetic flux conducting means is adapted to engage the casing of the motor.

Alternatively, the magnetic flux conducting means may be at least a part of the casing of the motor.

Preferably, the magnetic flux conducting means is fitted to a printed circuit board and the coil is terminated on terminals of the printed circuit board and the printed circuit board has male terminals arranged to mate with female terminals of the motor.

Preferably, the printed circuit board has circuitry for interpreting the signals from the coil and for controlling the motor in response to those signals.

Brief Description of the Drawings

Preferred embodiments of the invention will now be described, by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

Figure 1 depicts a rotation detector according to a first embodiment;

Figure 2 depicts the rotation detector of Figure 1 fitted to a flat sided motor;

Figure 3 is the view similar to Figure 2 of a rotation detector fitted to a round motor;

Figure 4 depicts a rotation detector according to another embodiment fitted to a motor;

Figure 5 depicts a rotation detector according to an alternate embodiment fitted to a motor;

Figure 6 depicts the rotation detector of Figure 5 fitted to a printed circuit board; and

Figure 7 depicts a rotation detector according to yet another embodiment.

Description of the Preferred Embodiments

In the rotation detector 10 of the first embodiment, shown in Figures 1 and 2, the magnetic flux conducting means is a flux ring 15 and the coil 11 is wound around the flux ring. The flux ring 15 is of the full shell type, meaning that the ring substantially surrounds the motor casing 22 in use. In practise, the inner diameter of the flux ring in its relaxed state is smaller than the diameter of the motor casing so that the flux ring 15 is stretched to fit the motor casing 22 with the resilience of the ring utilised to secure the ring to the motor. Additional detents may be provided. The shape of the ring substantially matches the shape of the motor casing to give a good contact between the casing and the ring to minimise the resistance of the magnetic flux path.

The motor 20 shown is a flat sided motor meaning that the casing has two arcuate, or part circular, portions 41 connected by two straight portions 42 the straight portions being parallel to each other. The stator has two arcuate permanent magnets 23 fitted to the circular portions 41 of the casing 22. The flux ring 15 is of a similar shape with a split 19 at a position corresponding to a plane passing through the poles of the stator magnets. The coil 11 is wound around one of the straight portions 42. This is where the magnetic flux concentration is greatest during use. The flux ring 15 is deformed to provide a stepped portion 18 at the position where the coil 11 is wound to produce a space or clearance between the flux ring 15 and the motor casing 22 for the coil as the flux ring is otherwise contiguous with the motor casing. The coil 11 may be terminated on terminals 12 fitted to the flux ring 15 as shown in Figure 1 or it may have fly leads 13 as shown in Figure 2 for connecting directly to the detection circuitry.

Figure 3 depicts a similar rotation detector 10 fitted to a round motor 20 (a motor with a casing having a circular cross-section). Detents (not shown) ensure that the flux ring 15 (also with a substantially circular cross-section) is fitted to the motor casing 22 with the split 19 aligned with a plane passing through the magnetic poles of the stator and the coil 11 is positioned on a stepped portion 18 between two adjacent poles of the stator. Such motors generally have two individual arcuate permanent magnets or a rubber ring magnet formed with two or more poles.

Figure 4 shows a rotation detector 10 similar in construction to the rotation detector of Figures 1 and 2, fitted to a flat sided motor 20 with the variation that the magnetic flux conducting means is a half shell flux ring 16 meaning that the flux ring 16 extends circumferentially about the motor casing 22 only about half way. In practise, the flux ring 16 extends slightly more than half way in order to provide a self-supporting grip on the casing. In all other respects, the detector is the same as the embodiment of Figure 1.

Figure 5 is a similar view to Figures 2 and 4 of a rotation detector 10 incorporating magnetic flux con-

ducting means in the form of a flux ring 17 of the quarter shell type. The quarter shell flux ring 17 extends between magnets along the flat side of the motor casing and supplements the flux path provided by the casing 22. Again, the flux ring 17 has a stepped portion 18 at a position between the poles or the magnets to accommodate the coil winding.

The quarter shell flux ring 17 allows interesting mounting arrangements such as the arrangement shown in Figure 6 where the flux ring 17 is fitted to a printed circuit board (PCB) 30. The PCB 30 has a connector 33 for connecting the board 30 to a power supply for the motor and for control signals for operating the motor. The PCB 30 also has electronic circuitry 32 for interpreting signals from the rotation detector 10 and for controlling the motor 20 in response to the signals from the rotation detector and the input control signals. The control signals may be simple on/off signals or may be more complicated including specifying the condition to be maintained, e.g., speed or position. In the embodiment shown, the motor has female terminals (not visible) and the PCB 30 has male terminals 31 for mating with the female terminals of the motor. The male terminals 31 also provide locating assistance and supporting assistance although in most applications, additional support for holding the motor 20 to the flux ring 17 and/or PCB 30 would be required to prevent accidental displacement of the motor with respect to the PCB due to vibration, knocks, etc.

While a flat sided motor has been shown, the quarter shell flux ring may be used with a round motor with care taken to ensure correct alignment of the flux ring with the poles of the stator.

The embodiment of Figure 8 dispenses with the separate flux ring and uses the motor casing 22 as the magnetic flux conducting means. The casing 22 which is of the flat sided type is made in two halves 25, 26 and is known colloquially as a clam shell casing. The two halves 25, 26 are joined together by dovetail connections 27. The connections 27 are formed along the straight sides of the casing and are located between the pair of magnets 23 forming the stator. Each half accommodates a single arcuate magnet.

One of the connections has a straight finger 28 on the first half 25 which is received in a cut-out 29 in the other half 26. About this finger 28, the induction coil 11 is wound or placed to monitor changes in the magnetic field as the rotor rotates. While the coil 11 may be bobbin wound which would help to support coil terminals 12, it is preferably epoxy or resin encapsulated providing a robust, stable and insulated coil of minimal dimensions.

As an alternative, the motor casing could be a deep drawn can with the finger being a cut and raised portion which is fitted with the coil and bent or deformed back into the recess formed by the creation of the finger with the distal end of the finger abutting or closely adjacent to the edge of the recess from which it was cut to minimise the resistance of the flux path through the finger.

While various preferred embodiments have been described, it will be appreciated by those skilled in the art that modifications and changes may be made to the embodiments described without departing from the spirit and the scope of the invention as defined by the appended claims. 5

Claims

1. A rotation detector for use with a direct current motor having a casing housing a permanent magnet stator, the detector comprising: 10
 - magnetic flux conducting means (15, 16, 17, 28) and 15
 - a detector coil (11) wound about the magnetic flux conducting means.
 - characterised in that 20
 - the magnetic flux conducting means (15, 16, 17, 28) is adapted to provide a flux return path for the stator whereby an electrical signal is generated in the detector coil (11) by changes in the magnetic flux of the motor 25
2. A rotation detector as defined in claim 1 wherein the magnetic flux conducting means (28) is at least a part of the casing (25, 26) of the motor. 30
3. A rotation detector according to claim 1 wherein the magnetic flux conducting means (15, 16, 17) is adapted to engage the casing (22) of the motor.
4. A rotation detector as defined in claim 3 wherein the magnetic flux conducting means (17) is fitted to a printed circuit board (30) and the printed circuit board (30) has male terminals (31) arranged to mate with female terminals of the motor (20). 35
5. A rotation detector according to claim 4 wherein the printed circuit board (30) has circuitry (32) for interpreting the signals from the coil (11) and for controlling the motor (20) in response to those signals. 40
6. A rotation detector according to claim 1 wherein the magnetic flux conducting means (15, 16, 17) is a flux ring fitted to the motor casing. 45
7. A rotation detector according to claim 6 wherein the flux ring (15, 16, 17) has a stepped portion (18) to accommodate the coil windings. 50

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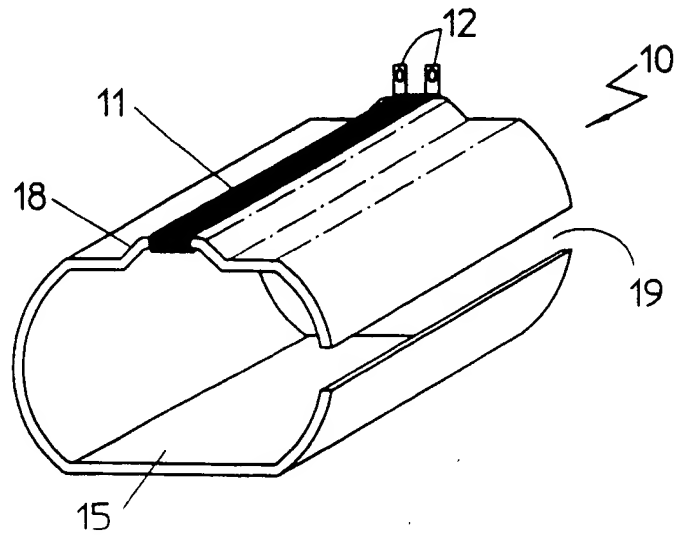


FIG. 1

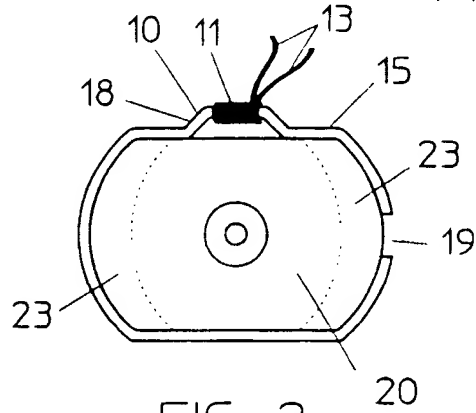


FIG. 2

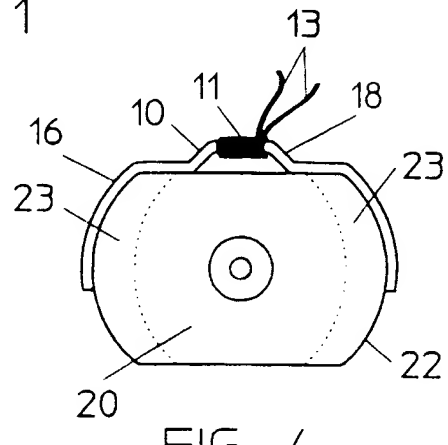


FIG. 4

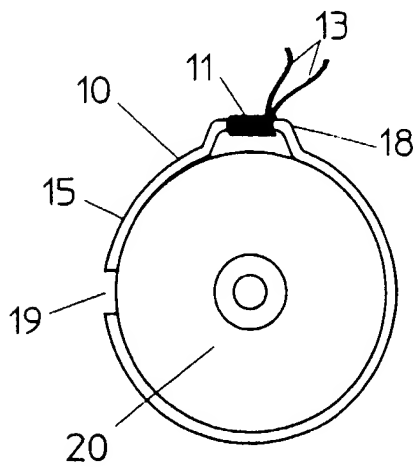


FIG. 3

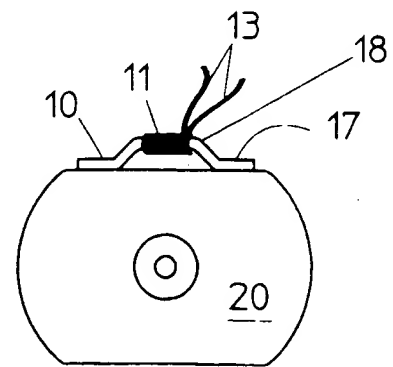


FIG. 5

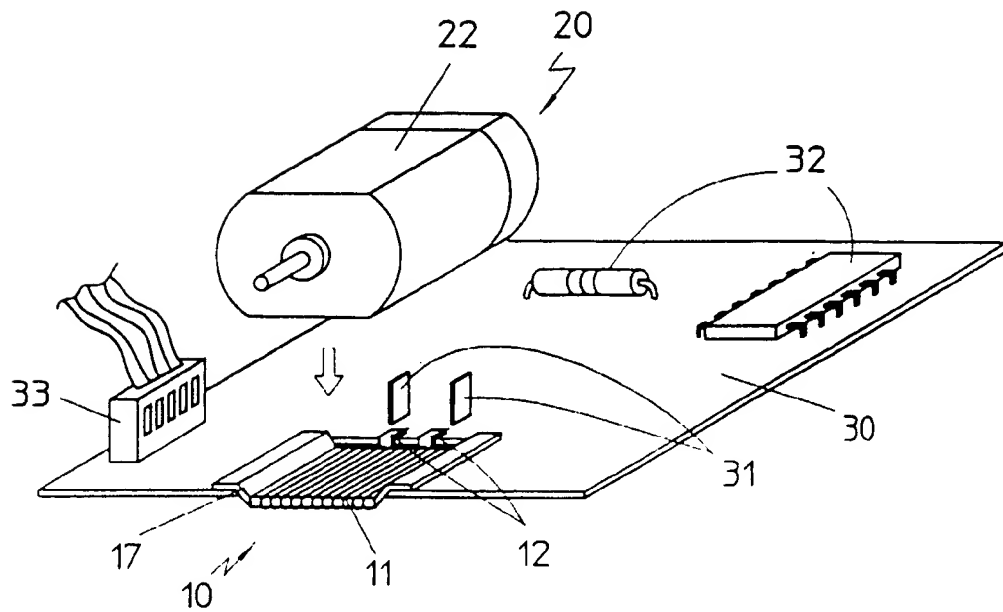


FIG. 6

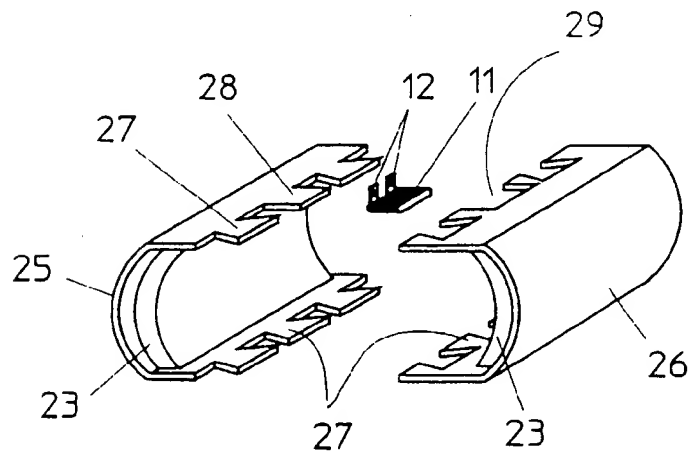
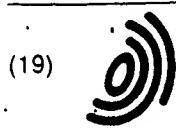


FIG. 7



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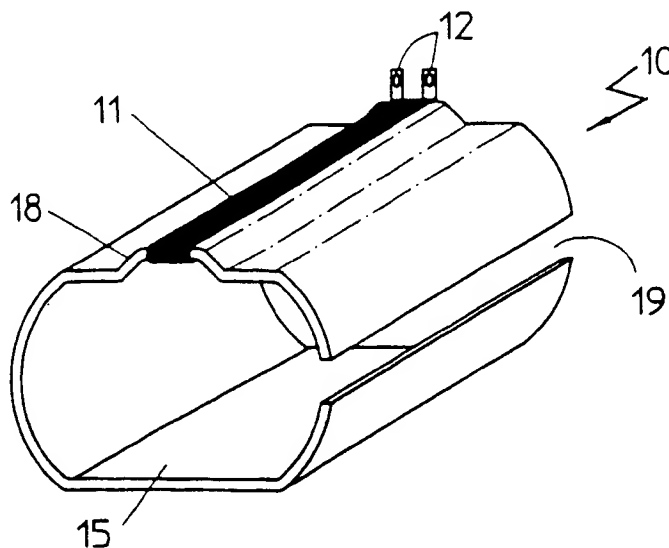


FIG. 1

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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 98 30 0345

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int.Cl.6)
X	US 4 082 968 A (JONES) 4 April 1978 * abstract * * column 2, line 10 - column 3, line 48; figures 1.2 *	1-3	H02K23/66 H02K11/00
A	US 4 138 642 A (MOHR) 6 February 1979 * abstract * * column 2, line 17 - column 3, line 21; figures 1-3 *	1	
A	US 4 914 713 A (MUELLER ET AL) 3 April 1990 * abstract * * column 2, line 26-63; figures 1-5 *	1	
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A	PATENT ABSTRACTS OF JAPAN vol. 14, no. 165 (P-1030), 30 March 1990 & JP 02 021266 A (ONO SOKKI CO LTD), 24 January 1990 * abstract *	1	TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.6) H02K G01P
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The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search BERLIN		Date of completion of the search 19 May 1999	Examiner Beitner, M
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document		T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document	

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